

# UPLIFT & EROSION

*The newsletter of the Grand Canyon National Park  
General Management Plan Implementation Team*



DECEMBER 2000

## 2000 ACTIVITY LOG (OR WHAT WE DID)

### **Transit System:**

- ✓ In January, we pre-qualified an exceptionally good group of five teams to bid on the light rail transit system.
- ✓ In June, we sent out a Draft Request for Proposals (RFP) to these five teams and by August, had hundreds of comments back, many of which we incorporated into the Final RFP.
- ✓ By November 1, we were prepared to release the Final RFP to the bidding teams.
- ✓ On November 30, we hosted a tour of the transit system proposal for three members of Congress who requested we not release the Final RFP until re-examining bus alternatives, in light of recently reduced visitation projections and the relatively high cost of the light rail system.
- ✓ In December, we created the outline of a report to Congress on bus transit alternatives.

### **Shuttle System:**

- ✓ For the first time ever, the Grand Canyon shuttle system began year-round operation.
- ✓ This year we modified the system's routes to get as many visitors as possible to the new Canyon View Information Plaza. Early results show the system is popular, more so than we anticipated.
- ✓ January 1, 2000 a new service contract was signed with Paul Revere Transportation for management of the shuttle system.

### **Canyon Forest Village (CFV):**

- ✓ We testified before the County Board of Supervisors in February in support of the CFV proposal, which received unanimous Board approval.

- ✓ We assisted the US Forest Service in responding to the court challenges to their August 1999 decision on the Tusayan Growth Environmental Impact Statement.
- ✓ Canyon Forest Village was ultimately unsuccessful in its bid to overcome a voter referendum challenge and the Board's decision was overturned in November.

### **Fee Demo Projects:**

- ✓ This program now has over 60 projects in various stages of accomplishment and has programmed over \$80 million. And more projects are about to be added since Congress approved the program for another year.
- ✓ Planning and design was initiated or continued on about 20 projects.
- ✓ Mike Hoffman, Fee Demo Budget Technician, and Debbie Lutch, Fee Demo Environmental Protection Specialist, were added to our team to help manage this program.

### **Heritage Education Campus (HEC):**

- ✓ Indirectly, progress was made this year in the form of HEC-related projects getting ready to start. For example, planning and design were advanced for a new mule barn and warehouse for the concessioner's operation (although we can take no credit for those projects moving forward - the work was done outside our team). These facilities, when finished, will permit two of the five main HEC structures to be vacated. In addition, we received final approval and pre-qualified bidders on the new National Park Service maintenance/warehouse project which should break ground Spring 2001. When that project is complete, the remaining three HEC structures can be vacated.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

- ✓ The HEC project continues to attract attention as a good student design project. We helped with a Harvard Graduate School of Design studio early in the year and an ECOSA Institute (Prescott, AZ) design class later in the year, both of which looked at the HEC site.

#### Greenway:

- ✓ We received approval from the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT), which is funding a portion of the project, to construct the first segment of trail - between Yavapai Point and the western-most overlook on Desert View Drive. This project is expected to start in Spring 2001.
- ✓ We reached the 60% design review stage for the second segment of trail - from Canyon View Information Plaza to Grand Canyon Village.

#### Employee Housing:

- ✓ What looked promising early in the year, fizzled later for lack of funds. The financial deal on the 60-unit apartment project we were working on did not come together.

#### Scheduling:

- ✓ We established a master schedule of projects in Microsoft Project and used it to keep track of presentations to the Development Advisory Board, eliminate conflicts, and judge progress.

#### Personnel:

- ✓ Michael Terzich, Foundation Project Manager, joined our team this year as manager of Grand Canyon National Park Foundation-funded projects. Michael has taken on the Greenway and HEC projects and has assisted with transit station planning for the Village Transit Center (which will be adjacent to the HEC).

## TRANSIT SYSTEM UPDATE . . .

All of a sudden, the whole landscape is different. Not the Grand Canyon, of course, but the environment in which we are doing our transit planning. So we shall be starting afresh in January 2001.

For some brief background, in 1995 the National Park Service adopted a General Management Plan (GMP) for Grand Canyon National Park which proposed a mass transit system. It did not specify the type of transit system. In 1997, further evaluation led to a decision to pursue light rail technology and place all day-use parking in the Tusayan area. Since then, the park has been designing and refining a light rail transit system with the intent of requiring a concession contractor to finance, design, build, operate, and maintain the system for a twenty-year period.

Over this past year (2000), two trends have converged to require a re-evaluation of the park's transit system decisions.

The first trend is the continuing lack of growth in visitation to Grand Canyon National Park. From 1994 through 1999, actual annual visitation to the park grew at an average rate of about 0.8% per year. However the three visitation projections used by the park in the past anticipated a higher growth rate. The highest (and oldest) projection is the GMP projection, done in 1992-93, of 6.85 million visitors by 2010. Another projection is an adjustment to the GMP projection done for the transit planning effort in December 1999. This projection lowered the estimate to 5.8 million visitors by 2010, based on recent traffic counts and future transit system implementation. The third (and lowest) projection, done in 2000 by a consultant to the park working on hotel and restaurant issues, estimates approximately 5.2 million visitors by 2010 but does not account for changes in the transportation system.

CONTINUED ON LAST PAGE



drawn by Betty Drake

Grand Canyon Express



# Things To Do in 2001

## Transit System:

- ❖ Prepare a report to Congress on bus transit alternatives.
- ❖ Depending upon the findings of the report, pursue design (if not light rail) and procurement of the recommended transit system.

## Shuttle System:

- ❖ Install permanent natural gas fueling facility.
- ❖ Purchase 7 trailer units for the Liquefied Natural Gas buses.
- ❖ Order additional Compressed Natural Gas buses, pending approval of funding.
- ❖ Continue adjusting the system to improve service, recognizing the current shuttle system is substantially undersized for the demands placed upon it.

## Canyon Forest Village (CFV):

- ❖ Continue to support the US Forest Service in responding to the court challenges to their 1999 decision, including defending the National Park Service (NPS) if the plaintiffs are successful in their effort to name the NPS as another defendant.
- ❖ Help look for ways to solve the problems addressed in the Tusayan Growth Environmental Impact Statement with the US Forest Service and CFV until and unless the US Forest Service modifies their 1999 decision.

## Fee Demo Projects:

- ❖ Submit requests for approximately \$14.5 million in 50+ projects.
- ❖ Begin construction on several projects like the North Rim campground improvements, NPS maintenance/warehouse project, rehabilitation of the historic Ranger Operations building, and rehabilitation of the Grandview Trail.
- ❖ Add another staff member to help keep track of Fee Demo projects.

## Heritage Education Campus (HEC):

- ❖ Make every effort, pending the availability of funds, to get planning and design of the project well underway this year. With all the main HEC buildings coming vacant in 12 to 30 months, the time is now to start in earnest.
- ❖ Begin work on a Cultural Landscape Report for Grand Canyon Village. This report will include the area encompassed by the future HEC.
- ❖ Work with an Arizona State University architecture class on a design studio of the HEC.

## Greenway:

- ❖ Continue working with the Arizona Department of Transportation to gain approval to construct the second trail segment, from Canyon View Information Plaza to Grand Canyon Village, in Summer 2001
- ❖ Plan and design the next trail segment - from Tusayan to Canyon View Information Plaza - in preparation for 2002 construction.
- ❖ Help the trail crew with construction of the first segment and enjoy having another project completed.

## Employee Housing:

- ❖ If the financial plan we were working on last year is terminated, we will develop and pursue plan B, which is likely to contain a federal funding component.

In general terms, with a new administration, a new superintendent, new direction on the transit project, a new Canyon View Information Plaza, and the voter's verdict reversing zoning approval on Canyon Forest Village, it feels like we are entering a whole new century!

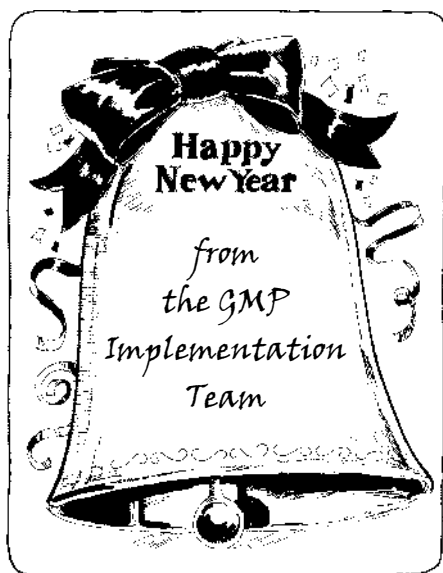


#### TRANSIT SYSTEM UPDATE CONTINUED...

The second trend is the increase in capital costs for the light rail project. Combining increased capital costs with reduced visitation projections made the projected cost at the turnstile rise to levels the National Park Service, and the public, may not have been willing to accept.

A visit to the park in late November 2000 from Congressman Regula (OH), Congressman Shadegg (AZ), and Senator Kyl (AZ) reinforced these concerns about the rail proposal. Their interest in the park's transit plans and their suggestion (which has become a requirement through legislation) to investigate phased transit alternatives is healthy for the project. Rather than thwart earlier plans, the congressional delegation has given us a new opportunity to succeed. The National Park Service will evaluate and report to Congress by June 1, 2001 on bus-based transit systems. Bus alternatives presumably will permit the system to be sized for smaller demand at the start and grow to accommodate the higher demand eventually expected. The report will not consider any proposed system to be temporary, but a series of phases leading to a system capable of the capacity envisioned in the rail proposal.

So, as we were coming down what appeared to be the home stretch, we took a tumble. In January, we will dust ourselves off and start a sprint in a different direction. The scenery over there is already starting to look better than where we were.



*Destiny grants us our wishes, but in its own way, in order to give us something beyond our wishes. - Goethe*



Please post or share this newsletter

OFFICIAL BUSINESS  
Penalty for Private Use, \$300

GMP Implementation Team  
Grand Canyon National Park  
823 N San Francisco Ste A  
Flagstaff Arizona 86001-3265